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Remarks-

Prepared for Delivery by
Mike Espy, Secretary of Agriculture
before the National Association of Agricultural Journalists
Washington, D.C.

April 19, 1993

I'm delighted to congratulate you on your fortieth anniversary.

You know, I was reluctant to come here today without a hard news peg.

When I was considering this talk in the past week, I thought at first that agriculture news professionals like yourselves would expect a major announcement, the disclosure of a significant development.

Well, I don't have one. And now, in fact, I believe that I don't need one. Because all of you, perhaps more than any other audience I will speak with this year, know that the real news of agriculture happens on its own. Agriculture has an impromptu quality about it; a vibrancy, a pulsebeat, a momentum to it that doesn't need a press release to make headlines, and waits for no Secretary of Agriculture.

Your organization was founded 40 years ago. Some of you started covering agriculture on a manual Royal, or a Selectric typewriter. Some of you began on a word processor, some on a computer. Whether you've been in this business 30 years or just the past three months, you've witnessed and recorded agriculture as front page news. You've been with me -- you've followed the issues that this great Department has been involved in during the first 100 days of the Clinton Administration, and you understand - and respect - agriculture as a force in our society.

I came into this office determined to set my own pace, to declare my own themes and priorities. Instead, we were we hit head-on with the E. coli outbreak. E. coli set the tone early, and quickly -- as we attempted to set our stride. We tried to confront it head-on; we tried to be responsive and forceful. But we've dealt with other issues, issues as diverse and complicated as food safety, agricultural disasters, the northwest forest conference, NAFTA and GATT negotiations, and grain sales to Russia. We even had a Medfly incident in the state of California. Let's look for just a moment at the past few months.

January 1993. E. coli. The tragic deaths of three children on the west coast from contaminated meat brought into sharp focus reforms that had been considered and debated for years. We flew to Washington state immediately --to talk, investigate, and reassure. The Food Safety and Inspection Service studies and my own discussions with whistleblowers confirmed an inspection system that is inadequate and unacceptable as we approach the 21st century.

If there ever was a time to do business differently, that time had arrived.

If there ever was a time to break from the status quo, that time had arrived.

If there ever was a time to effect the real change that the American people voted for in last November, that time certainly had arrived.

When Presidential candidate Clinton spoke of reinventing government, he was speaking of food safety. He was speaking of food safety and the thousands of programs throughout government agencies that need to be wrenched from the status quo and moved into the future.

And that's precisely what reinventing government is all about. It is not about change for its own sake, any more than it's about spending more or spending less.

Reinventing government is about entrepreneurial government.

It's about the most effective use of our resources, spending only when it's important to spend. It's about preventative government, a government that steps out ahead of a problem, and undertakes fundamental change when the tried and true has become the tired and worn.

In that vein, I proposed an increase for the sake of food safety in the 1994 budget. Our President agreed with that proposal, and we made certain changes within the Senate and the House -- if they pass we will have \$18 million to continue to fund our meat inspection system; \$10 million will fund 200 additional meat inspectors; and \$8 million will go toward a Pathogen Reduction Strategy. This system will use a battery of scientific techniques to deal with even the possibility of harmful microorganisms entering the food supply at key points throughout the production, distribution and consumption chain.

March 1993. I met on Capitol Hill with a unified delegation from the Michigan House and Senate. We talked about a corn problem there.

Michigan's corn producers showed me samples of their poor-quality corn -- with problems like low test weight and damaged kernels -- and frankly, they asked for help.

We started this administration of USDA with a face-to-face approach to problems and we're going to keep it that way. That's why we sent Randy Weber of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to Michigan the next day to check the extent of the low-quality corn first-hand.

Randy went to Michigan, and he verified the damage from natural disasters in 1992. And even though the quantity harvested would not usually qualify these corn producers for disaster assistance, I determined that they might be eligible for payments because of their low-quality crop.

Now I realize that this decision is of a precedent-setting nature. But that's what we're all about. What is also of a precedent-setting nature is that we responded so quickly and promptly in sending our experts there to review the damage in Michigan.

Where I come from, folks help each other out. That's a principle I believe belongs on Pennsylvania Avenue -- and 14th and Independence -- just as it does in the Mississippi Delta.

At the USDA we call it "farmer-friendly." But it's more than that. Acting quickly to relieve hardship conditions faced by producers in a critical situation is just plain good business sense. It's good for the farmer, for agriculture, and for the entire nation.

April 3. I flew out with President Clinton to attend the "forest conference" in the Pacific Northwest.

I am honored that the President asked me to join him and Vice President Gore for this eight-hour dialogue -- or debate, to put it more accurately -- on nothing less than the economic and environmental future of the Pacific Northwest.

You know as well as I that there are no quick, easy solutions to the emotional, historical and intellectual feud between jobs and old-growth forests. But we didn't go to the northwest expecting answers. We did go to start a dialogue -- and we achieved this.

President Clinton charged Cabinet members to craft a long-term policy and urged those attending to "stay at the table ... to keep talking and keep trying to find common ground..." Well, we're now at that table together, we're grappling with the difficult problems, and we are moving toward comprehensive solutions.

With E. coli, the corn crop, the forest conference and farm foreclosure suspensions and other issues like the budget crowding my calendar, I feel like I really hit the ground running on the domestic front. But American agriculture today is a global affair. Always underlying these home-based issues are international considerations -- providing humanitarian aid and securing the best possible position for American agriculture in world markets.

You know, it's one thing for the United States to state its support for the democratic reforms taking place in Russia. It's another to affirm that support with bottom-line assistance.

The \$700 million in agricultural credit sales that President Clinton has announced for the Russian Federation will give Russian consumers stable access to critical foods during this hard time of economic restructuring. These sales also underscore this Administration's commitment to maintain a presence for our farmers in what will continue to be an important market.

U.S. farm exports to the former Soviet Union exceeded \$1 billion in eight of the past 10 years. So we have a commitment to continue our sales to that market, and it's a commitment that we will fulfill.

Also on the international front, the United States, Canada and Mexico have concluded negotiations on NAFTA. By cracking barriers among the three countries, NAFTA will stimulate trade and economic growth in each country.

We're generally pleased with NAFTA's agricultural provisions and expect that they will benefit our farm economy in all regions of the United States. By the end of the 15-year transition period, we project an extra \$2 to \$2.5 billion per year in U.S. agricultural exports, stemming from increased trade with Mexico. These exports alone would mean more than 50,000 new jobs here at home.

As you know, the Uruguay Round multilateral trade negotiations under the GATT have been in recess since mid-January. The Clinton Administration wants to see the Round successfully concluded and has asked Congress for an extension of the fast track negotiating authority. I will be traveling to Brussels the first part of May to meet with my GATT counterpart to see if we can get the agricultural part of the GATT back on a successful track.

I don't know if you see it as I do, but to me there's a common thread running through the "big news" stories that I've just recounted.

World trade. E. coli. Timber. The corn crop. These have been big-time issues of the past few months -- headline news, you could say.

But from my perspective -- not just as a newly-appointed Secretary of Agriculture, but as a six-year congressman hitting on rural issues, and as a son of the South -- I also see the stories of agriculture that are buried on the back page, or never make the press at all.

If you should ever travel through the Mississippi Delta, you'll see what are called Indian ceremonial mounds, monuments to an ancient people. It is said, in fact, that my birthplace, Yazoo City, was built on two Indian mounds, each about 400 feet square and 50 feet tall.

Archaeologists have cleared the topsoil and peeled away the layers of years from many of these mounds. As they've done so, they've uncovered clues to the whereabouts of houses and articles of daily life that reveal a peaceful people, people like hunters and fishermen.

To me, agriculture today is a lot like those layers.

And I want to make clear that while I attend to the top layer, the bold issues, I will always be in touch with the people and the stories so far down that they are rarely ever seen.

Some of these stories are in my blood. They come, as I do, out of the rural South. They are stories, many of them, of deprivation -- of housing that's not good enough, health care facilities that aren't good enough, and clean, safe running water that doesn't exist in many areas.

That's why I am so incredibly proud to be part of an Administration that has made economic revitalization for rural America a cornerstone of its budget. The Clinton Administration has proposed a \$2 billion increase in rural development funding in the fiscal 1994 budget over 1993 funding. For housing alone, this Administration proposes a 27 percent increase over last year -- one of USDA's largest increases ever in rural housing assistance.

If you find me passionate in the next eight years on the subject of rural America, you'll also find me buoyant about the possibilities and realizations that this Administration will bring to government. Government does have a role to play.

I feel the potential of the President's long-term investment plan. His \$30 billion economic stimulus package would help create 500,000 new jobs. More than \$1.3 billion would come to USDA alone for immediate investments to stimulate growth in rural America.

Investment is a key word in this Administration.

The President is asking America to develop a sense of investment, a sense of tomorrow. He is trying to lead us, and to help us put aside the "I" of the 1980's for the "we" of the 1990s and the "we" of a healthier economic future. He's simply asking us to decide that we are way beyond the "me" thing; we're now going for the "we" thing.

And that change is starting right here in Washington -- with White House staff cuts and with reorganization in USDA.

We intend to streamline and to make USDA "farmer-friendly" and more farmer-responsive, and we have a number of considerations on the table. We plan, for example, to create a single Farm Service Administration. Certain agencies now serving farmers will definitely go into its makeup.

We're also looking carefully at our public affairs staffs throughout the department. Our purpose is to streamline, to reduce duplication, and maintain a timely, accurate information flow to the press and public.

While we're looking at information, we're enthusiastically adopting the face-to-face, town meeting style of governing that's becoming a Clinton Administration hallmark.

We will begin to host a series of at least six USDA issues forums, which I call our "Agenda for the Future." We'll launch this "Agenda" in late April on the matter of hunger in America, on food safety and we'll also include -- in the short term -- forums on issues like farm income and program simplification. My plan is to follow up each forum with six regional meetings here in Washington and throughout the nation.

On the internal front, this is also the era of open discussion. As you know, we held a town meeting with Vice President Gore, and USDA employees freely discussed and brought to light problems in USDA. And if you were there, you know it was indeed a free-flowing discussion -- they had no problem with criticizing the USDA.

I sincerely believe that this precedent of open dialogue will set the tone for effective, responsive government.

Programs, budgets, reorganizations don't happen in a vacuum. They will be the products -- call them the artifacts -- of our time in government. What makes them possible and makes them work is the tone set by the Administration.

The ancient Indians of the Mississippi Delta were thought to have been peaceful from the artifacts they left behind. My ambition for this tenure of USDA is not only that our budget proposals were funded or that every resident of our country would finally get access to clean, safe running water in their own home.

My ambition is much greater. My ambition is that we will be considered to have truly listened to and worked with farmers and our broader constituency to the best of our ability.

Thank you allowing me to be here, and I'm honored that you would give me your time and attention.



Release No. 0297.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

by
Mike Espy
Secretary of Agriculture
in Commemoration of Earth Day
Before a Group of Employees in USDA's Forest Service
Washington, D.C.

April 20, 1993

I am pleased to celebrate Earth Day with you today.

For the last 23 years, people around our country, indeed around the world, have gathered to celebrate our fragile planet. Here at the U.S. Department of Agriculture we know all too well the delicate links between the health of the planet and health of our people.

In some ways, it is our department which is closest to the earth, the earth of the field and the forest. We have a solemn charter from the American people to act as their stewards of the land -- to help those who work on the land and to balance our country's needs for food and fiber with our responsibility to conserve our vital natural resources for future generations. I particularly like the theme of this year's event, "Working With the Earth, Honoring Indigenous People." Combine our special responsibilities for the land with our unique relationship with Native Americans, and you'll understand why I find this year's topic so appealing.

USDA has a special relationship with the sovereign Indian nations in our country. Nearly half of all Native Americans live in rural areas. Ten years ago, USDA established an office to make sure that we deliver USDA programs to our Native Americans and Alaskan Native populations. For their part, Indian tribes and Alaskan natives are full partners in all our environmental programs, including Forest Service programs.

As you probably know, the Forest Service has a Tribal Government Policy and Program to strengthen its growing relationship with the Indian tribal community. We are working hard at the relationship between this department and the tribal community, I know we can do more and we will.

But I don't want to focus on the programs today, I instead, want to add my voice to the many which will be raised around the country in celebration of our earth. As a father with two young children, I take very seriously my responsibility to leave the Earth a better place.

This Department has long and proud tradition in conservation and forestry. Today, our greatest challenge is to get our agencies working together, with a shared vision and purpose -- to carry out our mandate as stewards of the public's resources. If we are to leave a better planet to our children, we must embrace a new ethic of environmentally responsible behavior today.

If we all accept personal responsibility for the planet and change our lives accordingly, we can look for a future that will bring a higher quality of life for our children, a healthier environment and a stronger economy.

I really can't believe that we will make the kind of choices that lead away from that vision of the future. Not on the watch of this president or this secretary of agriculture.

As you listen and learn today from both our children and our Native American brothers and sisters, think about the lessons of the past, and commit yourself to a better future for all of us. Good bless and have a happy Earth Day.



Testimony

Release No. 0293.93

Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

OF
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE MIKE ESPY
BEFORE THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

April 20, 1993

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members of the Committee, it is indeed a privilege to appear before this Committee as the Secretary of Agriculture to discuss the programs and budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

At the outset, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that I look forward to working with the members of this Committee. Because of my previous association with the Congress and my experience with rural development, food and farm programs, I intend to work hard at fostering a good working relationship between the Clinton Administration and this Committee. As you well know, the Department's programs are extremely important to rural residents, consumers, low-income persons and farmers throughout the nation. I am excited about heading a Department that can do so much good for so many people. In order to carry out my duties as Secretary of Agriculture, I will need the help of the dedicated employees at the Department and also the help of this Committee and the other congressional committees with jurisdiction over the Department's programs.

Today, I would like to focus on the President's economic plan and particularly his FY 1994 budget proposals as they pertain to the Department of Agriculture. We think this plan represents real change. It gives rural America a real shot in the arm and a chance to share fully in the President's vision for the economic revitalization of our Nation.

Clinton Economic Plan

President Clinton's economic plan includes three basic components: 1) a short-term economic stimulus package that will affect FY 1993; 2) a longer term investment program that will affect FY 1994-1997; and 3) a serious, credible plan for deficit reduction. The deficit reduction part of the plan focuses on proposed discretionary program and entitlement savings for FY 1994 through FY 1997 as well as across-the-board reductions in overhead, personnel and administrative costs.

Clearly, deficit reduction leading to lower long-term interest rates will benefit all America, especially rural America which needs capital for economic growth. In 1992, interest payments on the debt were \$200 billion, over three times the total budget for the Department of Agriculture. These interest costs are eating up a larger and larger share of the budget, taking funds away that could be used for productive investment. A sound deficit reduction plan must face up to the facts and provide the realistic funding levels for discretionary and entitlement programs that will bring the deficit down. It will also require us to look carefully at how we carry out and administer programs.

Short-Term Economic Stimulus

I would like to focus first on the short-term economic stimulus. The stimulus package is designed to produce more jobs by investing in the Nation's infrastructure. It also makes an initial added investment to human capital by providing additional assistance to people who are in need. The economic stimulus is also being proposed to provide insurance against a further lapse in the economic recovery. The stimulus package as it pertains to the Department of Agriculture includes additional funding for:

- increasing the number of meat inspectors
- constructing water and waste disposal systems
- constructing single family houses and repairing low-income housing
- repairing and constructing watersheds
- enhancing natural resource protection, environmental and recreational infrastructure on the National Forests
- modernizing and repairing Federal agricultural research facilities
- expanding the WIC caseload, providing more commodities for the Emergency Food Assistance Program and funding meals for children added to the Head Start Program.

Longer-Term Investments

As part of the longer-term investment program of the President's plan, the budget includes program increases of \$3.3 billion in 1994 and a cumulative program increase of \$23 billion during the 1994-1997 period for the Department of Agriculture for high priority investments in both human and physical capital.

The Department plays a vital role in the rural economy. The Secretary of Agriculture, under the law, is to provide leadership within the executive branch for rural development efforts. I intend to be a loud and persistent voice for rural America in this Administration. Rural revitalization will be one of my top priorities. USDA programs can help lead in turning the country in a new direction.

As part of the rural development initiative in the Clinton Economic Plan, we are requesting significant increases in programs providing loans and grants for community facilities and rural businesses with emphasis on small enterprises to provide jobs and services for many families living in small towns. Water and waste water loans and grants will be increased substantially over the levels appropriated for FY 1993. These increases together with those increases included in the economic stimulus package are necessary so that we can provide thousands of families here in America access to clean water and sanitary waste disposal. Further, about \$800 million will be added to our rural housing program. In total, these programs will provide 108,000 housing units, a 27 percent increase

over last year's level. We also are proposing to expand and build health care facilities and enhance fire and rescue services all across rural America.

In the food safety area, there are a number of initiatives. First, an additional 40 meat and poultry inspectors will be hired in addition to the 160 hired in FY 1993 and a major research initiative to reduce the level of food-borne pathogens will be initiated. We simply must develop new scientific ways to inspect our meat supply to ensure that our families can continue to benefit from the safest food supply in the world. In the food assistance area, we are proposing a \$5.8 billion increase over 4 years in the Food Stamp Program. Food Stamp increases will help offset the effects of the energy tax on low-income households. We are also proposing increased funding of \$2.7 billion for WIC over 4 years so that all people eligible for the program are covered by the end of FY 1996. In order to pay for meals for pre-school children added to Head Start, we propose additional funding for the Child and Adult Care Food Program during FY 1994 - FY 1997 that would build on a similar increase for FY 1993.

We also will propose to increase competitive grants under the National Research Initiative by \$480 million over four years to support high priority agricultural, food and environmental research.

Proposed Discretionary Reductions

In order to reduce the deficit, spending on discretionary programs will have to be reduced. The President's 1994 Budget will propose over \$400 million in discretionary savings in 1994 and \$3.1 billion in cumulative savings over FY 1994-1997 period. A number of programs will be targeted for reductions.

A major proposal in the budget will be the creation of a single Farm Service Agency. This proposal is also known as one-stop shopping. The agency will be created from the current USDA agencies serving farmers at the county and regional level. These agencies include the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Farmers Home Administration. The proposal would improve service for farmers while reducing staff needs and administrative overhead at the USDA National, State and local levels. My priority is to streamline from top to bottom starting with the Washington bureaucracy first and then restructuring the field offices. In setting up the new agency we will be looking for ways to improve productivity, reduce regulatory burdens, reduce paperwork requirements, and make our operations more farmer and user friendly.

We are also looking at restructuring other functions in USDA to improve efficiency and reduce costs. I will be working with the Congress to carry through on these reorganization proposals.

In addition to these restructuring and streamlining efforts, the budget before this Committee will propose a number of other discretionary program changes including the following:

- REA loans would be made at Treasury rates while preserving loans for truly needy borrowers.
- Meat and poultry inspection fees would be charged to cover all overtime work by Federal inspectors beyond the first scheduled shift.
- Lower priority economic and agricultural research would be eliminated.
- Funding for foreign agriculture market development activities through the Foreign Agricultural Service would be reduced by targeting areas where trade prospects are most promising, while the Market Promotion Program in the mandatory area would be maintained at the current FY 1993 level.
- FmHA direct farm credit would be reduced but subsidized guarantees would be increased.

Mandatory Programs

We can not reduce the deficit significantly unless savings are achieved in the mandatory-entitlement area of the budget. While health care costs are the most significant area in this regard, USDA programs also must make a contribution, keeping in mind that these programs made a significant contribution in

the 1990 Budget Agreement. Our farmers have already given a lot and they should be proud that their contribution and what they do to produce food and fiber in this country has been recognized by this Administration.

The 1994 budget for USDA contains savings of \$192 million in 1994 and \$4.5 billion in cumulative savings for FY 1994-1997 for mandatory programs. However, I want to assure the Committee that, aside from a modest targeting proposal, proposed changes to the major farm commodity programs would not take effect until 1996. We will take no unilateral action that will make our farmers weaker in international negotiations. I do not want to undermine our leverage in these negotiations with cuts in farm programs at this point in time. However, beginning with the 1996 crops, we are proposing as part of the President's program increasing the noneligible payment acres of the triple base program, eliminating the 0/92 and 50/92 programs and increasing assessments on "nonprogram" Federally subsidized commodities that are currently being assessed under the 1990 Budget Agreement.

Beginning with 1994 crops, income support payments would be limited to those farmers making less than \$100,000 in off-farm income in an effort to better target these payments to smaller, family-sized operations. Also, wool and mohair direct support payments would be limited to \$50,000 per person. As was discussed in the campaign, honey program subsidies would be eliminated beginning in FY 1994. This is the only commodity program proposed for termination.

In addition to these program proposals, the crop insurance program is also in need of reform. We are proposing to phase in area based insurance coverage. Under this approach indemnities would be based on an area (county) yield rather than on an individual farm yield. We would begin in crop year 1994 by offering such insurance in those counties with the worst loss experience on individual coverage. To the extent that commodity disaster payments are made in the future, the loss threshold would be increased from 35 to 40 percent for those producers with crop insurance and from 40 to 50 percent for those producers without crop insurance.

USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services have developed a joint legislative proposal which would provide for reimbursement of State administrative costs for food stamps, Aid for Dependent Children, and Medicaid with State and Federal governments sharing equally in the cost. This would amount to a reduction in Federal funding for State administration of about \$20 million on a base of \$1.5 billion for 1994.

Across-the-Board Reductions

The President also announced governmentwide reductions in employment and pay costs as well as a 14 percent reduction in administrative costs over 4 years. For the Department of Agriculture, there would be a reduction of 7,500 staff years between 1993 and 1998 or a 6.7 percent reduction in staffing. The administrative savings as a result of cuts in travel, printing, consulting and other contractual services would amount to over \$700 million over FY 1994-FY 1997. These actions are designed to improve operations and efficiency of the Government's programs. When the actions are completed, the Department of Agriculture will be a leaner, more effective organization.

Recently there has been publicity about the effectiveness of the Department of Agriculture. The perception in some quarters is that USDA has become an outmoded and unresponsive bureaucracy, no longer client friendly or interested in reaching out beyond the traditional farmer client base to others who also have legitimate concerns. I promise to seriously and thoughtfully address the valid concerns and criticisms expressed and, where appropriate, make changes in USDA operations.

The Department of Agriculture has long been known as the "People's Department." Based on Congressional authorizing and appropriations legislation, the Department has been mandated to carry out a broad and diverse set of programs, with a broad constituency of people who are affected by its activity. As Secretary of Agriculture, I want you, Mr. Chairman, and each member of this Committee to know that I will dedicate myself and the Department to being a positive force in improving the

economic health of America, particularly rural America. I intend to work hard to ensure that people living in rural America have access to the basic services which other areas of the country take for granted -- including them fully in President Clinton's strategy for economic revitalization. I will seek to reach out to all USDA constituents and become an honest broker for their responsible concerns.

That concludes the comments I would like to make today. I look forward to working closely with the Committee concerning our mutual interest in the well-being of rural America. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

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Statement-

Release No. 0308.93
Joel Berg (202) 720-4623

by
Mike Espy
Secretary of Agriculture
On the Opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Washington, D.C.

April 22, 1993

It is my somber honor to note the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. It is highly fitting that this museum is located in the very core of our nation's capital, because it is critical that all Americans understand the history and lessons of the Holocaust.

On behalf of the men and women of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, I welcome this museum to our neighborhood around this nation's Mall. I have already toured the museum and will encourage all our employees to visit it.

We all wish we didn't have to extend this welcome. We wish we didn't have to spend our time today focusing on horrible deeds of the past. Yet we must accurately understand all sides of the human condition. It is important for our children to visit the nearby National Gallery of Art--to stand only a few feet away from actual canvasses by Rembrandt Van Rijn or Mary Cassatt--to understand the glorious beauty that can be created by fellow human beings. But it is just as important for these children to visit the new Holocaust museum--to be taught that the choice between the beauty and the ugliness is in their very own hands.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." To me, those words represent the most important lesson of the Holocaust--the lesson that it is our supreme moral duty to stand up against injustice wherever and whenever we find it.

This lesson has been taught well by Elie Wiesel, the great Nobel-prize winning author and Holocaust survivor who has dedicated his life to opposing human rights abuses around the world, from the former Soviet Union to South Africa.

This lesson was taught equally well by Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Cheney, two white Jewish men and one black Christian man, who gave their lives fighting against racial inequality in my home state of Mississippi. And so this lesson must be learned--and learned well--by all of us.

We must all find the moral courage to stand up for the sanctity of human rights around the globe. We must act with the understanding that the fate of the world is in our very own hands. We must never allow ourselves to be silent again.

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News Releases-

Release No. 0291.93
Jan Suszkiw (301) 344-2173
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

NEW SUGARCANES COULD SWEETEN PROFITS FOR FLORIDA GROWERS

WASHINGTON, April 20--Florida sugarcane growers could earn more thanks to from four new sugarcane varieties, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist said.

"Each of the four varieties has at least one outstanding characteris-tic," said Jimmy D. Miller, a plant geneticist for the department's Agricul-tural Research Service. He said each new variety exceeds CP 70-1133--one of the state's most popular commercial varieties--in sugar yield per acre, millability, or sucrose content per ton of cane.

"A cane crop's value to growers is determined mainly by the combination of those three traits," added Miller, research leader at the ARS Sugarcane Field Station in Canal Point, Fla.

The new varieties, known as CP (for "Canal Point") 81-1238, CP 84-1198, CP 85-1432 and CP 85-1492, were also evaluated for growth and resistance to insects and disease. ARS scientists at Canal Point developed the four varieties in cooperation with University of Florida scientists and the Florida Sugarcane League, Inc.

All four resist yield-robbing diseases such as eye spot, smut, leaf scald, rust and sugarcane mosaic virus. In field tests, the new varieties were left fairly unharmed by the sugarcane borer, a serious insect pest of the Florida crop, Miller said.

The new varieties are primarily adapted to the subtropical climate and sand or muck soils around Lake Okeechobee, Florida's only cane-growing region. Scientists in Louisiana and Texas will test-plant the new varieties in those states as well, Miller said.

The Canal Point facility has been exchanging its varieties with breeders in other states and countries since the early 1960s. "Several CP varieties selected in Florida have yielded well in Texas and in countries such as Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico and Indonesia," he said. "Probably the most successful use of CP varieties outside Florida has been in Central America, where scientists who introduced CP varieties during the past decade have seen spectacular yield increases."

Miller said Canal Point scientists develop new varieties by relying on Florida's most productive varieties as primary parents in a recurrent breeding program. "We also use varieties from Louisiana, Texas and foreign countries, and in the long run that broadens the genetic base of Florida's commercial varieties," Miller said. "The future of the Florida cane industry is pretty much in our crossing house where new cross combinations are produced."

According to the University of Florida, nearly 2 million tons of raw sugar--one-fourth the U.S. total--were harvested in Florida in the 1991-92 growing season.

Soil of nearly all the state's 430,000 sugarcane acres is nitrogen-rich muck. About 54,000 acres is sand with varying mixtures of muck.

"All varieties released in Florida in the past were recommended for both muck and sandy soils," Miller said. "For the first time last year, we recommended one of our varieties (CP 81-1238) primarily for sandy soils."

Of the four new varieties, CP 81-1238 and 84-1198 averaged the highest sucrose content per ton of cane. "The higher the sucrose content, the sweeter the variety," Miller said.

On sand, CP 81-1238 also produced about 8 percent more sugar yield per acre than the popular variety, CP 70-1133, over three harvests. Miller said CP 81-1238 could increase a grower's return by 14 percent.

On muck, CP 84-1198 yielded about the same sugar per acre as CP 70-1133. "But it should increase returns to growers by about 8 percent due to its higher sucrose content," Miller said.

Florida growers generally harvest sugarcane three times from one planting. After each harvest (one a year), the sugarcane grows back on its own. But due to constant stress from insects, disease, and farm machinery, each regrowth normally produces less, Miller said. When yields decline too much, growers replant fields with new segments of cane stalk.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact Jimmy D. Miller, plant geneticist, Sugarcane Field Station, USDA, ARS, Canal Point, Fla. 33438. Telephone (407) 924-5227.

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Release No. 0294.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

ESPY SAYS USDA PROGRAMS CAN HELP LEAD COUNTRY IN NEW DIRECTION

WASHINGTON, April 20--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy said today the president's economic plan represents real change which gives rural America a shot in the arm and a chance to share fully in the economic revitalization of the Nation.

Testifying before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's FY 1994 budget proposals, Espy said he intends to be a loud and persistent voice for rural America. "Rural revitalization will be one of my top priorities," he said. "USDA programs can help lead in turning the country to a new direction."

As part of the rural development initiative in the economic plan, USDA is requesting significant increases for loans and grants for community facilities and rural businesses. These programs will provide jobs and services for families in small towns, Espy said. Among them are proposals to provide thousands of families access to clean water and sanitary waste disposal, and to provide 108,000 housing units, a 27 percent increase over last year. Also under the plan, health care facilities would be built and expanded, and fire and rescue services would be enhanced all across rural America.

Another major proposal is the creation of "one-stop shopping" for farmers. Espy said a single Farm Service Agency will be created from current USDA agencies serving farmers at the county and regional level. "The proposal would improve service for farmers while reducing staff needs and administrative overhead at the USDA national, state and local levels," Espy said.

Espy also said that in order to reduce the deficit, a number of programs will be targeted for reductions. Those changes include:

- making Rural Electrification Administration loans at Treasury rates while preserving loans for truly needy borrowers;
- charging meat and poultry inspection fees to cover all overtime work beyond the first scheduled shift;
- eliminating lower priority economic and agricultural research;
- targeting foreign agriculture market development activities where trade prospects are most promising;

- reducing direct farm credit but increasing subsidized guarantees;
- beginning with 1994 crops, limiting income support payments to those farmers making less than \$100,000 in off-farm income;
- limiting wool and mohair direct support payments to \$50,000 per person; and
- eliminating honey program subsidies beginning in FY 1994.
- reforming the crop insurance program.

Espy said he will dedicate himself and USDA to being a positive force in improving the economic health of America, particularly rural America. "I intend to work hard to ensure that people living in rural America have access to the basic services which other areas of the country take for granted," he said. "I will seek to reach out to all USDA constituents and become an honest broker for their responsible concerns."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Full text of Espy's testimony (release no. 0293.93) is available from USDA's News Division, Rm. 404A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone (202) 720-9120.

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Release No. 0295.93
Robert Feist (202) 720-6789
Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

USDA RELEASES SWEETENER MARKET DATA REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 1993

WASHINGTON, April 20--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today released its Sweetener Market Data report for February 1993.

Report totals, in short tons (2,000 pounds), include:

- Feb. 1, 1993 beginning sugar stocks - 3,668,142.
- U.S. beet sugar production for February 1993 - 351,640.
- U.S. cane sugar production for February 1993 - 451,809.
- Deliveries for February 1993 - 634,142, including deliveries for domestic human consumption - 628,442.
- Feb. 28, 1993 ending sugar stocks - 3,865,930.

Copies of the April 15, 1993 Sweetener Market Data report for February data are available from the Sweeteners Analysis Division, ASCS/USDA, Room 3727-S, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013; telephone (202) 720-3391; FAX (202) 720-8261.

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Release No. 0298.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

USDA EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD ON RULE TO IMPLEMENT FOREST APPEALS PROCESS

WASHINGTON, April 20--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service would extend the comment period for proposed changes to their appeals regulations.

The 30-day extension will allow public response until June 1. The comment period originally was to end April 29.

"I am extending the comment period to encourage full discussion of the appeals process," Espy

said. "It's important that everyone who wants to participate has the opportunity to do so."

The proposed rule, which was developed under the previous administration, would allow for early public involvement and the opportunity to appeal projects and activities that implement Forest Service land and resource management plans. It was the result of a congressional directive in the fiscal 1993 appropriations measure.

Espy said that once the extended comment period is completed, USDA will review the proposed rule and move quickly to craft a final rule which responds to the comments received.

Comments must be sent in writing to Deputy Chief, National Forest System (1570), Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090.

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Release No. 0300.93
Robin Porter (301) 436 6573
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

USDA ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETING AT JFK AIRPORT

WASHINGTON, April 21--A public meeting is scheduled in New York on May 12 to provide input on a proposed gull management program at John F. Kennedy International Airport. The meeting is a cooperative effort between the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service .

"The Port Authority and APHIS are continuing to develop a draft environmental impact statement for gull management activities at the airport," said Bobby Acord, deputy administrator of APHIS' Animal Damage Control program. "This meeting is to identify potential issues to be analyzed in the impact statement."

Since the 1960's, APHIS biologists have helped the Port Authority reduce the number of collisions between aircraft and birds at John F. Kennedy International Airport. An average of 1,500 bird strikes are reported by commercial airlines each year.

Acord said the year-round bird control program includes removing food and water sources from the airport, closing nearby landfills, using noise-making devices and bird distress calls to scare the birds, and controlling insects.

The meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., May 12, 1993, at the Travelodge Hotel, Building 144, JFK, Jamaica, N.Y. Notice of the public meeting was published in the April 13 Federal Register. Mailed comments will be accepted if they are received on or before April 30. An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 92-181-2 should be sent to: Janet Sillings, State Director, USDA, APHIS, ADC, RD #2, Box 360-C, Locust Grove Road, Pittstown, N.J. 08867-9529; telephone (908) 735-5654.

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Release No. 0301.93
Alicia L. Ford (202) 720-8998
Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

FLUE-CURED TOBACCO ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO MEET MAY 27

WASHINGTON, April 21--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Flue-Cured Tobacco Advisory Committee will meet May 27 in Raleigh, N.C.

L.P. Massaro, acting administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the committee will elect new officers, establish submarketing areas, discuss selling schedules and review the policies and procedures for the 1993 marketing season.

The 39-member committee, established by the secretary of agriculture, provides information essential to the orderly marketing of flue-cured tobacco. It also recommends opening dates and selling schedules for the flue-cured tobacco-growing regions from Virginia to Florida.

The meeting will be held in the Flue-Cured Tobacco Cooperative Stabilization Building, 1306 Annapolis Drive, at 10 a.m. It is open to the public. Anyone wishing to address the committee should contact the Director, Tobacco Division, AMS, USDA, Room 502 Annex, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 205-0567.

Written statements may be submitted to the same address, before or after the meeting, or given to the committee chairperson at the meeting.

Notice of the meeting will be published in the April 22 Federal Register.



Release No. 0302.93

Sally Klusaritz (202) 720-3448

Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

U.S. TO DONATE BUTTER, BUTTEROIL FOR USE IN ARMENIA

WASHINGTON, April 21--The United States will donate \$10 million worth of butter and \$2.6 million worth of butteroil for use in Armenia, according to Christopher E. Goldthwait, acting general sales manager for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service.

The Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, a private U.S. voluntary organization, will sell the 7,200 metric tons of butter and 1,500 metric tons of butteroil through Armenian government distribution channels. The commodities will be sold through state stores that are set up to ration food.

Proceeds from the sales will be used by the diocese to support developmental activities such as providing agricultural credit and supporting extension programs.

The donation will be made under Section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949, which authorizes the donation of surplus commodities owned by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation to developing countries. The program is administered by FAS.

The supply period for this donation is fiscal 1993.

For more information, contact James F. Keefer, FAS, (202) 720-5263.



Release No. 0303.93

Clarence Steinberg (202) 720-6179

Edwin Moffett (202) 720-4026

ESPY ANNOUNCES REFERENDUM ON NATIONAL DAIRY PROMOTION PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, April 21--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced an August referendum of U.S. dairy farmers to determine whether they favor continuing their national dairy promotion and research program.

Espy said he received petitions with over 16,000 signatures requesting a referendum on the future of the program.

Under the Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983, which authorizes the program, a referendum must be held if requested by at least 10 percent of the nation's dairy farmers. The secretary also may call a referendum if he believes that sufficient question is raised as to whether the program is meeting its intended purpose.

"In view of the many dairy farmers asking for a vote and to avoid the costs of verification, which would have to be paid by dairy farmers from program funds, I have chosen to waive verification and proceed with the referendum," Espy said.

All dairy farmers producing milk for commercial use during April 1993 will be eligible to vote in the August referendum, Espy said. For the program to continue, a simple majority of those voting must favor it.

The period between April and August is necessary for issuing notices dairy farmers must receive prior to voting, said Espy.

Dairy farmers finance the promotion and research program with a 15-cent per hundredweight assessment on all milk produced and marketed commercially in the 48 contiguous states. A 36-member board appointed by the secretary of agriculture administers the program.

The program was last approved by dairy producers in 1985.

Details of the referendum will be announced in a future issue of the Federal Register. For copies and additional information, contact Eugene Krueger, Agricultural Marketing Service, Dairy Division, Rm. 2968, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456, telephone (202) 690-4128.



Release No. 0305.93
Jim De Quattro (301) 344-2756
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

SCIENTISTS TO REDESIGN PLANT GENES TO HALT UV-B "SUNBURN"

WASHINGTON, April 22--Giving stronger "sunblocker" genes to cotton, vegetables and other crop plants could shield them from an overdose of the sun's rays at high noon, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist said.

"We are exploring a way to use genetic engineering to keep excess sunlight and ultraviolet-B radiation from entering leaves. Too much visible light or UV-B rapidly destroys a leaf protein crucial to photosynthesis," said Autar Mattoo of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

Scientists have long known that excess sunlight on crops, especially beating down at high noon in midsummer, destroys a leaf protein known as D1. But recently, ARS' Mattoo and Israeli scientists found that D1 is destroyed even faster when exposed to higher levels of UV-B radiation in the sun's rays. Mattoo heads the Plant Molecular Biology Laboratory at the agency's Beltsville, Md., research center.

D1 is vital in enabling leaves to use light in a chain reaction that changes atmospheric carbon into a form the plant uses as its food, Mattoo said. But a threat to this protein by a continued rise in UV-B--from thinning of the earth's ozone layer--could "eventually translate into low quality crops, lower crop yields and less food," he said.

A defense against too much sunlight and UV-B may be possible, he said, by genetically boosting the production of natural sun-blocking compounds, called flavonoids, on the skin of a leaf.

Mattoo plans to pursue the flavonoid gene strategy with geneticist Robert Last of the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research in Ithaca, N.Y. While federal agencies including USDA search for ways to reduce pollution, he said ARS researchers are seeking insurance against UV-B damage--just as they seek to thwart crop and livestock pests and diseases that haven't yet arrived in this country--but may someday.

D1 is made in the chloroplasts--the molecular photosynthesis factories in green leaves. D1's destruction by UV-B "reduces a chloroplast's efficiency," Mattoo said. He conducted the UV-B studies with professor Marvin Edelman's research team at Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science.

"When high levels of UV-B are accompanied by excess light, there's a synergistic effect--D1 is destroyed even more rapidly," Mattoo said. "But flavonoids on the skin of a leaf help screen out UV-B. Increasing their levels might block UV-B and thus protect the D1 protein."

Even if UV-B radiation can be reduced toward pre-industrial era levels, plants with stronger flavonoid genes should be more productive than they are now under excess sunlight.

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NOTE TO EDITOR: For details, contact Autar Mattoo, research leader, Plant Molecular Biology Laboratory, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, USDA, ARS, Beltsville, Md. Telephone (301) 504-5103.

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Release No. 0309.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

ESPY SAYS REINVENTED USDA WILL FULLY BACK EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

WASHINGTON, April 22--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today, as part of his efforts to reinvent the U.S. Department of Agriculture from top to bottom, he would put the full power of his office behind Equal Employment Opportunity and civil rights enforcement in USDA.

Espy's statement coincided with his issuance of a new departmental policy statement on EEO and civil rights.

The 1992 EEO Commission report ranked USDA last among federal agencies in the employment of minorities and about mid-way in the employment of women. "We can--and will--improve on our past hiring performance," Espy said.

"A key element of reinventing government in this department is creating a participatory work environment that allows all employees of Team USDA to realize their full potential, increase their productivity, and end activities that waste human resources," Espy said. "To achieve these goals, USDA will make every effort to obtain a diverse work force, ensure equal opportunity, respect civil rights, end discrimination, and create a work environment free from harassment based on gender or sexual orientation.

"President Clinton and his administration understand that this government can only function properly if its employees are judged solely on how well they serve American taxpayers," continued Espy.

Secretary Espy directed all assistant secretaries and agency heads to distribute the new statement by May 7, to every USDA employee, in the Washington area and in field offices in all 50 states.

The statement makes it clear USDA is committed to backing civil rights and EEO with concrete actions that focus on accountability and results, not on process. "I know that many employees, at all levels, are absolutely committed to the goal of assuring equal opportunity for all in employment and program diversity. However, many also believe that past EEO statements, while sincere, were not reenforced with the necessary actions and follow-up that critical policy issues require," Espy said in the policy statement.

The statement also included the following mandates:

--Managers and supervisors will be evaluated for their performance in EEO and civil rights. Success in this vital area will be an important factor in the performance assessment of every employee. It will be considered in their competition for monetary awards as well as for future responsibility.

--USDA will improve the ability of civil rights and EEO related units to accomplish their duties in a timely and high quality manner. The present EEO complaint system will become less burdensome and less easily misunderstood. The units will be designed to increase--not decrease--the efficiency of the agencies to which they are assigned.

--USDA will create an environment in which employees and supervisors are able to discuss concerns openly without fear of reprisal or retaliation. The department will work to end the belief that filing a EEO complaint will be detrimental to one's career. The department will not tolerate anyone making overt racist or sexist remarks in the work place.

--USDA will eliminate discrimination from program delivery systems, reach out to groups that have been historically neglected, and systematically ensure inclusiveness in carrying out all of the department's functions. The department will communicate in such a manner that everyone making an inquiry or participating in USDA programs understands how programs will benefit them.

"This policy is more than a sincere statement of intent. It is a personal commitment to take actions necessary to ensure implementation. Each employee, at every level, will be held personally accountable for her or his performance in ensuring equal opportunity and promoting civil rights," Espy said in the policy statement.



Release No. 0311.93
Clarence Steinberg (202) 720-6179
Edwin Moffett (202) 720-4026

USDA SEEKS COMMENT ON PROPOSED NATIONAL FLUID MILK PROMOTION PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, April 23--The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking public comments on a proposal to establish a national fluid milk promotion and consumer education program.

The program would be funded by a mandatory assessment on all fluid milk products marketed in consumer-type packages by fluid milk processors in the contiguous 48 states, as authorized by the Fluid Milk Promotion Act of 1990, under the 1990 farm bill. Marketers of less than 300,000 pounds of fluid milk products could be exempted from assessment.

The 1990 act requires USDA to consider such a proposal only when its proponents represent a minimum of 30 percent of the fluid milk products marketed by all milk processors in the 48 states. The

current proponent, the Milk Industry Foundation, meets that standard, said L.P. Massaro, acting administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

Fluid milk processors, the milk industry and the general public will be able to comment on the proposed new program either by testifying in person or in writing at a public meeting on April 29, USDA, Room 1709-S, 14th Street and Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C., beginning at 9 a.m. Comments also may be sent in duplicate, postmarked by May 21, to the Hearing Clerk, Room 1083-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

USDA will use the transcript of the public meeting and the mailed comments to determine whether to recommend the fluid milk program, Massaro said. Implementation would depend on the outcome of a referendum of affected processors.

Details of the proposal, including information about the public meeting, were published in the April 21 Federal Register.

For copies of the proposal or for additional details, contact the Order Formulation Branch, Dairy Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2968-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; tel. (202) 720-7311.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: *The national fluid milk promotion program should not be confused with the National Dairy Promotion Program for which a national referendum has been scheduled to determine whether dairy farmers favor its continuation (see USDA release No. 0303.93).*

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Release No. 0313.93

Dianne Odland (301) 436-8617

Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR MARCH

WASHINGTON, April 23--Here is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for March 1993:

COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK IN MARCH 1993

	----- Food plans -----			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate-cost	Liberal
	(in dollars)			

Families:				
Family of 2 (20-50 years)	50.50	63.80	78.70	98.00
Family of 2 (51 years and over)	47.70	61.30	75.60	90.40
Family of 4 with preschool children	73.50	91.80	112.20	138.00
Family of 4 with elementary schoolchildren	84.10	107.80	134.80	162.50

**Individuals in
four-person families:**

Children:

1-2 years	13.30	16.20	19.00	22.90
3-5 years	14.30	17.60	21.70	26.00
6-8 years	17.40	23.30	29.20	34.00
9-11 years	20.80	26.50	34.10	39.40

Males:

12-14 years	21.60	30.10	37.50	44.10
15-19 years	22.40	31.00	38.60	44.70
20-50 years	24.10	30.90	38.50	46.70
51 and over	21.80	29.30	36.10	43.30

Females:

12-19 years	21.70	26.00	31.60	38.30
20-50 years	21.80	27.10	33.00	42.40
51 and over	21.60	26.40	32.60	38.90

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans -- thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost, and liberal.

David Rust, HNIS acting administrator, said the plans consist of foods that provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

In computing the costs, USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods and other nonfood items bought at the store.

"USDA costs are only guides to spending," Rust said. "Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes, and how much food is prepared at home."

"Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable," he said. "The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for families who have tighter budgets. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan."

To use the chart to estimate your family's food costs:

-- For members eating all meals at home -- or carried from home -- use the amounts shown in the chart.

-- For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent for each meal eaten away from home from the amount shown for the appropriate family member. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

-- For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart pertain to individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the "individual" figures and make these adjustments (note: larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones):

- For a one-person family, add 20 percent.
- For a two-person family, add 10 percent.
- For a three-person family, add 5 percent.
- For a five- or six-person family, subtract 5 percent.
- For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

Details of the four family food plans are available from the Nutrition Education Division, HNIS, USDA, Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.



Program Announcements-

Release No.0292.93

Gene Rosera (202) 720-6734

Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES

WASHINGTON, April 20--Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Charles J. O'Mara today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

--long grain whole kernels:	7.36 cents per pound
--medium grain whole kernels:	6.63 cents per pound
--short grain whole kernels:	6.61 cents per pound
--broken kernels:	3.68 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment (LDP) rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are:

	Loan Gain and LDP Rate\$/Cwt.....	Marketing Certificate Rate
--for long grain:	\$2.03	\$0.10
--for medium grain:	\$1.84	\$0.12
--for short grain:	\$1.84	\$0.13

These announced prices and rates are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made April 27, at 3 p.m. EDT.



Release No. 0304.93

Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES COUNTY LOAN RATES FOR MINOR OILSEEDS

WASHINGTON, April 22--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today announced county price support loan rates for the 1993 crops of mustard seed, safflower seed, oil sunflower seed and other type sunflower seed.

Copies of the rate schedules are available from: Thomas Fink, Cotton, Grain and Rice Price Support Division, USDA/ASCS, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013; Tel: (202) 720-8701.

The loan rates were set in accordance with provisions of the Agricultural Act of 1949 and reflect the national average price support of \$8.90 per hundredweight for each type of oilseed.



Release No. 0306.93
 Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206
 Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES 1993 COUNTY LOAN RATES FOR CANOLA, FLAXSEED AND RAPESEED

WASHINGTON, April 22--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today announced county price support loan rates for the 1993 crops of canola, flaxseed and rapeseed.

Copies of the rate schedules are available from: Thomas Fink, Cotton Grain and Rice Price Support Division, USDA/ASCS, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013. Tel: (202) 720-8701.

The price support loan rates were determined in accordance with provisions of the Agricultural Act of 1949 and reflect the national average price support rate of \$8.90 per hundredweight for each oilseed crop.



Release No. 0307.93
 Minnie Tom H. Meyer (202) 720-6734
 Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATES FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, April 22--Tom VonGarlem, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, April 29. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, April 23 through midnight Thursday, April 29.

This period represents Week 2 of the 6-week transition period from using current shipment prices to using forward shipment prices in the AWP calculation. The procedure was adopted to avoid a dramatic change in the AWP that could occur with no transition period, due to differences between new and old crop price quotes. This procedure is also used to calculate the U.S. Northern Europe (USNE) price for the purpose of determining the maximum allowable adjustment to the AWP under the Step 1 provision.

For Weeks 1 and 2, the Northern Europe (NE) price = [(2 x NE current price) + (NE forward price)]/3. The NE coarse count price = [(2 x NE coarse count current price) + (NE coarse count forward price)]/3. The USNE price = [(2 x USNE current price) + (USNE forward price)]/3.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the NE price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 92 percent of the 1992 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 4.84 cents per pound. Following are the relevant calculations:

I. Calculated AWP	48.00 cents per pound
1992 Base Loan Rate	52.35 cents per pound
AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate	92

II. USNE Price	66.52 cents per pound
NE Price	-61.68 cents per pound
Maximum Adjustment Allowed	4.84 cents per pound

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

NE Price	61.68
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	11.82
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.55
Average U.S. location	0.31
Sum of Adjustments	- 13.68
Calculated AWP	48.00
Further AWP adjustment	- 0
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	^a 48.00 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price	61.68
NE Coarse Count Price	- 58.60
	3.08
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	- 3.95
	- 0.87
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT.....	0 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is below the 1991 and 1992 base quality loan rates of 50.77 and 52.35 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the AWP, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is below the 1992-crop loan rate, cash loan deficiency payments will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo obtaining a price support loan with respect to the 1992 crop. The payment rate is equal to the difference between the loan rate and the AWP. Producers are allowed to obtain a loan deficiency payment on a bale-by-bale basis.

This week marks the end of the spring transition period. Four weeks of both NE current shipment prices and NE forward shipment prices are now available. The current user marketing certificate rate is based on the difference in the fourth week between the USNE current price and the NE current price, minus 1.25 cents. The current rate payment is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to Sept. 30, 1993. The forward user marketing certificate rate is based on the difference in the fourth week between the USNE forward price and the NE forward price, minus 1.25 cents. The forward rate payment is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for contracts entered into by exporters for delivery after Sept. 30, 1993.

The USNE current price has exceeded the NE current price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1992 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the current user marketing certificate payment rate is 2.07 cents per pound. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	USNE Current Price	NE Current Price	USNE Current Minus NE Current	Current User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate 1/
		cents per pound	
1	Apr. 1, 1993	63.25 (c)	60.85 (c)	2.40	1.15
2	Apr. 8, 1993	63.85 (c)	61.00 (c)	2.85	1.60
3	Apr. 15, 1993	64.08 (c)	61.03 (c)	3.05	1.80
4	Apr. 22, 1993	64.85 (c)	61.53 (c)	3.32	2.07

1/ USNE current price minus NE current price minus 1.25 cents.

(c) Based on current price quotations.

The USNE forward price has exceeded the NE forward price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the forward user marketing certificate payment rate is 6.63 cents per pound. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For Friday through Thursday Period Ending	USNE Current Price	NE Current Price	USNE Current Minus NE Current	Forward User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate 2/
		cents per pound	
1	Apr. 1, 1993	69.65 (f)	62.09 (f)	7.56	n/a
2	Apr. 8, 1993	70.20 (f)	62.10 (f)	8.10	n/a
3	Apr. 15, 1993	69.92 (f)	61.88 (f)	8.04	n/a
4	Apr. 22, 1993	69.85 (f)	61.97 (f)	7.88	6.63

2/ USNE forward price minus NE forward price minus 1.25 cents.

(f) Based on forward price quotations.

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rates will be announced on Thursday, April 29.



Feature-

Release No. 0290.93
Don Comis (202) 344-2748
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

UNDERGROUND WEATHERMAN SPECIALIZES IN NORTH COUNTRY WINTER FORECASTS

WASHINGTON, April 19--James A. Staricka is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's underground weatherman.

This winter--and it is still winter in Minnesota--Staricka, a soil scientist, and members of his "Frost Crew" have taken weekly treks through up to two feet of snow at Swan Lake Research Farm near Morris, Minn., as well as at a University of Minnesota site 125 miles south of Morris. They were tracking a "freezing front" below Minnesota cornfields.

Staricka describes this front as the leading edge in the soil where water starts to freeze. "Freezing creates suction that draws up water, along with dissolved pesticides and fertilizer," he said.

Minnesota is one of five Midwestern locations chosen by USDA for research to evaluate techniques to minimize water contamination.

If farmers know where the pesticides and fertilizer collect during the winter, he said, they can choose tillage techniques in the fall to keep the water and chemicals from leaching down to groundwater in the spring. "They will also know at what depth to sample before applying fertilizer," said Staricka.

"There's still a little snow on the ground here," Staricka said, noting that it looked as though Minnesota's spring would be even later than usual this year. The Frost Crew made its last trek on Friday, April 9. Staricka's report on that day's results bears some similarity to above-ground weather reports: "Soil frost had thawed only about a foot down. That leaves about another 1 foot 4 inches of frost below that left to thaw. Soil frost reached its maximum depth in mid-February, 2 feet 4 inches, compared to the long-term average of 4 feet."

As an aid to farmers, Staricka includes a water quality report: "The thawing could concentrate nitrogen fertilizer and pesticides. Farmers need to monitor where these chemicals are so they don't escape the reach of plant roots and find their way to groundwater."

Staricka was trained by ARS' dean of underground weather, George R. Benoit, who retired this past summer after eleven winters of checking snow and frost tubes, drilling five-foot long soil cores, reading soil moisture gauges, and collecting data from an automated cable system that collects hourly measurements of unfrozen water. Benoit retired from USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Morris, where Staricka began working two winters ago.

Staricka said he recently told Benoit to be glad he got out before this winter--"it's the first time in my life I've had to shovel snow to take a soil sample."

In Staricka's underground world, water doesn't always freeze at 32 degrees F. "An exceedingly thin film of water coats each soil particle and doesn't freeze until well below 32 degrees," he said. This film gives surface snowmelt and underground water a path through frozen ground in every direction, he said. Also, wormholes and other cracks provide passage for unfrozen water.

Staricka said that it takes about 3 months for the soil frost layer to fully form. But it only takes about 3 days after the frost melts completely in the spring for water trapped in the frozen soil to escape in a sudden downpour, he said. This could move the dissolved chemicals down to three to five feet or more below the surface.

"This indicates that farmers who sample for nitrogen-nitrate in their soils in the spring should test deeper than the usual one foot," he said, giving the same type of practical advice aboveground weather forecasters offer.

He said the sudden flushing after the spring thaw explains how a farmer's field changes from a swampy mass to firm ground so quickly in the spring.

Staricka said farmers can't control the weather any more than their city neighbors, but they can leave a "blanket" over their fields to warm the soil. This blanket consists of plant residue left on the surface after harvest. Standing corn stalks can trap blowing snow and provide a thicker layer of insulating snow. This keeps the cold front from spreading deeper into the ground and keeps soil water and possibly dissolved chemicals closer to the surface, he said.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact James A. Staricka, North Central Soil Conservation Research Laboratory, USDA, ARS, Morris, Minn. 56267. Telephone: (612) 589-3411.

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